



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

June 16-June 30, 2010

### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### **Tarakhil Power Plant Transferred to Afghan**

**Government:** On June 27, the U.S. Government transferred control of the 105-megawatt Tarakhil Power Plant to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Tarakhil, a state-of-the-art thermal facility, is capable of serving more than half a million Kabul residents at peak periods. Three years ago, Kabul received only a few hours of electricity per day, but now has round-the-clock power thanks to Tarakhil and other energy initiatives.

Flanked by Afghan ministers and accompanied by USAID Mission Director Earl Gast, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry called the transfer another example of America's commitment to Afghanistan's development.

"I am deeply honored to represent the American people to celebrate the success of extending power to 600,000 men, women, and children," Ambassador Eikenberry said. "The transfer of this highly efficient power plant to the Government of Afghanistan increases access to energy and affects everything the Afghan Government wants to achieve for its people."

Ambassador Eikenberry singled out for special recognition the plant's Afghan operators, who will assume management of the plant and help Afghanistan to meet its goals of self-reliance and businesslike performance in the energy sector. "These fine young people in green and orange are the future of Afghanistan and the reason for hope and confidence," the Ambassador said.



U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry (right) is joined by (right to left) Minister of Economy Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, USAID Mission Director Earl Gast, and a power plant operator to transfer the Tarakhil Power Plant from the American to the Afghan people.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP



Children in Bagh-e-pol Village receive their new school supplies.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

### STABILIZATION

**Zhari District Governor Supports Schools:** In Zhari District, Kandahar Province, schools have been abandoned for the past two years after the Taliban closed them. Reopening them was a priority for District Governor Niaz Muhammad Sarhadi. USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program provided him with school supplies including 150 desks and chairs, stationery, and other classroom equipment to distribute to Pir Mohammad School in Senajary Village and a temporary school in Bagh-e-pol Village.



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Community members came out to see the District Governor and school principals distribute the supplies, and reporters patrolling with ISAF forces that day covered the event. Classes at the temporary school in Bagh-e-pol are now in session, and students are pleased to have proper school supplies to aid their studies. Students of Pir Mohammad School will enjoy their new supplies when the school reopens in September. LGCD is continuing to work with local Afghan government institutions to strengthen governance through improved service delivery in Zhari.

**Health Training Reaches Women Throughout Logar Province:** The Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) in Logar has prioritized health education for women to combat high rates of preventable disease and infant mortality. USAID's LGCD program partnered with DoWA to implement a two-phase health and hygiene program for women in four priority districts where educational opportunities are extremely scarce. Female trainers from the districts of Puli Alam, Azra, Muhammad Agha, and Charkh completed a training-of-trainers session and then led classes of 60 women from each respective district.

After completing the training, the participants committed to sharing their knowledge with two other women in their home villages. Thus far, 320 women received training and LGCD distributed 500 hygiene kits containing basic toiletries to families in these vulnerable districts. By supporting sub-national Afghan government institutions like DoWA with the resources required to deliver basic services and establish a presence in volatile areas, LGCD is working to improve stability in Afghanistan.

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

**Afghan Carpet Traders Participate in Domotex Middle East Trade Show:** Ten Afghan carpet companies successfully participated in the Domotex Middle East Trade Show in Dubai. USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project sponsored a pavilion representing carpet production from various regions of the country. The Afghanistan pavilion displayed many styles and designs, including Khal Mohammadi, Mushwani, Chobi Ziegler, Sherwan, Turkmen Bokhara, Kazak, Kargai, and Belgique.

Although the global carpet market is suffering from the effects of the global economic recession, Afghan participants' sales and contracts totaled \$450,000, a 15 percent increase from the previous year. Buyers represented hotel chains, apartment complexes, and carpet wholesale and retail outlets from across the Middle East.



Potential customers admire Afghan carpets at the Domotex Middle East Trade Show.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED



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ASMED also worked with the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) to host a matchmaking event, bringing together Afghan carpet traders and several buyers in a more intimate venue to discuss overcoming obstacles to trade between Afghanistan and the Gulf region. ASMED presented various project initiatives designed to support the value chain, including cut-and-wash facilities and carpet design training. ASMED and the EPAA are considering further marketing initiatives, including a trade mission to Russia and South Africa.

### **Successful Core Banking System Implementation in Da Afghanistan Bank's SherKhan Bandar Border Branch:**

USAID's Economic Growth and Governance Initiative and Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) have implemented the Core Banking System (CBS) in DAB's SherKhan Bandar border branch. This achievement brings the number of DAB branches using the system to 33.

The CBS allows the SherKhan Bandar branch to produce daily trial balance and profit and loss statements. Its clients get daily computer generated statements, which minimize errors and discrepancies. Moreover, the system eliminates the need to prepare manual statements for each account. This improvement will have a positive impact on revenue collection and on-time transfer to the treasury single account at DAB's head office. The border branches are especially important to both the Ministry of Finance and DAB as a convenient and efficient location for border-crossers to pay fees and duties.



A trainer instructs staff of the SherKhan Bandar border branch on how to use CBS reports.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI



Provincial Council member Mahbobullah Mahbob cuts the ribbon to inaugurate the Kunduz Gemstone Training Center.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

**Gemstone Training Center Launched:** The Shamal Afghanistan Jewelry and Gemstone Association Training Center in Kunduz Province celebrated its official inauguration. USAID's ASMED project supported establishment of the training center by providing specialized equipment for cutting and polishing gemstones, as well as two generators.

The gemstone training center is the first of its kind in Afghanistan and will help to increase the quality of gemstones cut and polished in Afghanistan. The center represents the strength of Afghanistan design as an internationally recognized and high-quality brand for export.





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### DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

**Paved Roads in the Tirin Kot Bazaar:** USAID's Afghanistan Municipal Strengthening Program recently paved three streets in the Tirin Kot Bazaar in Uruzgan Province. The project paved the bazaar area's three main roads totaling 500 meters in length. The concrete pavement is a significant improvement over the previously dirt roads, which were extremely dusty during dry periods and very muddy during the wet seasons. Having a paved street has greatly benefited both the merchants and the customers in the Tirin Kot Bazaar.

The poured concrete streets were the third phase of a learning-by-doing street construction program in Tirin Kot that had previously constructed three cobblestone street sections and a concrete paver street section in other areas of the city. The local labor force performed work on all three projects.



Merchants and customers walk along the newly paved road in the Tirin Kot Bazaar.

PHOTO: USAID/AMSP



Kandahar University students and faculty tour the new ANGeL center.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA

### EDUCATION

#### **Afghan Next Generation e-Learning (ANGeL)**

**Center Opens at Kandahar University:** On June 17, Kandahar University administrators, faculty members, and students celebrated the opening of the university's ANGeL Center. The center will fundamentally change the roles of faculty by giving them access to current information in their respective disciplines. Through computers in the center, instructors will be able to connect to the Afghanistan digital library system and e-learning resources, such as online journals and academic papers. Since resources will be readily available, instructors will be able to spend less time searching for materials and

focus more time on facilitating student learning.

Vice Chancellor Shah Mahmoud Barak opened the ceremony by emphasizing the importance of this learning center to Kandahar University's efforts to provide quality instruction. A USAID representative noted that the ANGeL Center will provide an important link between Kandahar University and universities in other parts of the world. Students will



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now have access to online courses in academic areas that are not currently available in Kandahar.

IT skills instruction at the center will follow the International Computer Drivers License (ICDL) curriculum. This ANGeL Center – like the six other ANGeL Centers already operating in Afghan universities – will be licensed to offer ICDL certificates to individuals who complete all seven course modules and obtain a passing score on the ICDL exam. The ICDL and English classes will begin this summer.

After the ceremony, members of the university community visited the ANGeL Center, which includes 50 computers and other media that will support instruction in information technology, English, and e-learning for Kandahar University faculty and students. Students and faculty members who attended the ribbon cutting ceremony expressed their gratitude to USAID and Afghan eQuality Alliances for making it possible to access the skills and information they need.